Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Archives and Records Management Consulting

Final Report

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Introduction

The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County engaged Hunter Information Management Services to conduct an assessment of archives and records management.

The goals of the project are to:

- Assess current policies, procedures, and facilities for centralized archives and records management.

- Review the current status of records management in a cross-section of Metropolitan Government agencies.

- Develop a plan for improvement that includes

  o A vision of the future role of archives and records management

  o Recommendations for changes or additions to statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures

  o An analysis of needs for the storage of paper records

  o A role for digital imaging and micrographics

  o Best practices from the public and private sector

Excluded from the study were the following agencies or departments: Airport Authority, Development and Housing Agency, Public Schools, Transit Authority, and Nashville Electric Service.

The project followed a nine-step methodology used successfully in conducting assessments of archives and records management programs at all levels of government. The steps are:

1. Review documentation prepared by the government prior to the initial visit.

2. Conduct detailed interviews and review current procedures and facilities used for archives and records management.

3. Meet with a cross-section of agency records creators and custodians, either in individual meetings or focus groups.

4. Conduct focus groups with other constituents of the archives and records management: genealogists, other researchers, the news media, etc.

5. Prepare summaries of all focus groups and meetings. These summaries guarantee that the detailed knowledge does not leave with the consultant at the end of the project. (The summaries are attached as appendices to this report.)

6. Draft a report that meets the project goals and objectives

7. Lead discussions of the draft report among the various groups and individuals who participated in the earlier meetings.

8. Finalize the report.

9. Make public and private presentations about the final report, as requested by the client

From February 28 to April 17, 2002, I spent 12 days in Nashville gathering data, primarily by conducting interviews and touring records locations. I held a total of 47 meetings, focus groups, or site visits. Summaries of these meetings and interviews can be found in the Appendix to this report. The summaries are an integral part of this report and provide the foundation for the findings and recommendations contained herein. I also submitted three drafts of the final report for comment and correction.

The report contains the following sections:

- Section 1: Executive Summary
- Section 2: List of Recommendations
- Section 3: Current Status of Records in Metro Government
- Section 4: Assessment of Records Center
- Section 5: Assessment of Archives
- Section 6: Review of Statutes, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures
- Section 7: Plan for Improvement
  - o Vision for the Future
  - o Organizational Placement
  - o Facilities
  - o Reformatting
  - o Electronic Records
  - o Training
  - o Staffing
  - o Compliance

Section 1: Executive Summary

The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County is at a crossroads. Despite the proliferation of computer technologies, the volume of paper has increased. Despite the existence of archives and records management programs, Metro employees still demonstrate a lack of awareness of fundamental recordkeeping practices. And despite the renewed interest in disaster planning following September 11, Metro continues to have major vital records exposures. Metro Government has a choice to make: either it can address these issues now or it can continue to drift toward inefficiency, duplication of effort, and potential disaster.

Across Metro Government I found records stored inefficiently. I also found inactive records still being retained in the originating departments, partly because the Metro Records Center is full and also because of departmental preferences to keep records near at hand.

Electronic recordkeeping will not have an immediate impact on this situation. Metro Government is involved in a bid process for the implementation of an enterprise-wide imaging and workflow system. While this will begin to reduce the volume of paper (provided originating departments agree to destroy paper after scanning), the process will take time. Metro Government does not have the luxury of waiting; it must address archives and records management now. While E-government, electronic filing, and digital signatures all hold great progress and should be encouraged, Metro cannot wait for the promise to be fulfilled.

Many of the pieces already are in place, including professionally-managed centralized archives and records management facilities. What is needed is the integration of these operations, the identification of sufficient space for their operations, and the addition of staff to provide increased levels of service. Such a commitment will not only benefit Metro Government, but it will benefit all the citizens whose rights and obligations are protected and defended through the records of Metro Government.

Improving the present situation will involve addressing eight elements. The elements and key recommendations are:

1. *Vision for the future.* Archives and records management should be seamlessly integrated in Metro Government. Records should be managed professionally throughout their entire life cycle, from creation or receipt through destruction or archival preservation. Scarce resources should be combined in a way that increases efficiency and maximizes the delivery of services to both government agencies and individual citizens. The Archives should refocus its mission exclusively on government records. Metro should clarify the differences between the Archives and the Nashville Room. The Metro Archives and the Nashville Room should develop a documentation strategy for Nashville and Davidson County.

2. *Organizational placement.* Archives and Records Management should be combined in one independent agency reporting directly to the Mayor and Metro Council.

3. *Facilities.* Metro should build a new, joint facility for the Archives and Records Center. This facility must have sufficient storage space to manage the inactive records of all Metro agencies, including the judicial system. The Metro Archives must have sufficient space for collection storage, collection maintenance, and public service. Metro should purchase a vehicle for delivery and pickup services to be provided by the combined Archives and Records Center.

4. *Reformatting.* Metro should establish a Division of Digital Imaging and Micrographics in the new Archives and Records Center. The Division should begin by expanding the current microfilming program of the Archives. It then should add the capability to digitize both paper and microfilm and to generate Computer Output Microfilm (COM) from digital files. For disaster protection as well as preservation reasons, original microfilm should be stored outside of the Metro region.

5. *Electronic records.* Metro should increase staff awareness of and familiarity with electronic records. Archives and Records Management should work with the implementation team for the new Metro imaging system. They also should develop policies and procedures for electronic records management.

6. *Training.* Archives and Records Management training should be expanded both in quantity and method of delivery (including the Internet). The Archives should expand its outreach programs, especially exhibits and working with the schools.

7. *Staffing.* Metro should add a minimum of 2 staff members to the Records Center in the next year (a driver and Certified Records Manager). The Archives and Records Management staff should be expanded beyond this minimum as service level requirements increase.

8. *Compliance.* Internal Audit should be given the responsibility for monitoring compliance with archives and records management policies and procedures.

Section 2: List of Recommendations

The following are my recommendations for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. The recommendations are not presented in priority order; rather, the recommendations are listed in the order they are found within the body of the report.

1. Metro should institute a vital records protection program for both paper and electronic records (page 11).

2. Metro should improve the status of Records Officers within agencies (page 12).

3. The Metro Records Center must have sufficient storage space to manage the inactive records of all Metro agencies, including the judicial system (page 15).

4. Because of problems with the existing Records Center (insufficient storage space, poor storage environment, and lack of sprinklers), Metro should build a new Records Center rather than renovating the current facility (page 16).

5. The Metro Records Center should have its own secure service for the pickup and delivery of records (page 18).

6. The staff of the Metro Records Center should be expanded as service level requirements increase (page 19).

7. The budget of the Records Center should be increased to meet expanded service requirements (page 20).

8. Records Management training should be expanded both in quantity and method of delivery (including the Internet) (page 21).

9. The Archives should refocus its mission exclusively on government records (page 23).

10. The Metro Archives and the Nashville Room should develop a documentation strategy for Nashville and Davidson County (page 23).

11. The Archives' Web site should be moved to the main Metro Web site rather than being hosted on a commercial Internet Service Provider (page 24).

12. The Metro Archives should be relocated to a single facility with sufficient space for collection storage, collection maintenance, and public service (page 25).

13. For disaster protection as well as preservation reasons, original microfilm should be stored outside of the Metro region (page 27).

14. The Archives should expand its outreach programs, especially exhibits and working with the schools (page 29).

15. The definition of "record" in Metro code should include the distinctions found in Tennessee Code. The definition of record also should be extended to include records on all media and in all physical forms (page 30).

16. The Metro Clerk should be made a member of the Public Records Commission (page 31).

17. The Metro Code should be changed to define mayoral papers as "public records" and require that mayoral papers be transferred to the Metro Archives (page 31).

18. Archives and Records Center policies and procedures should be presented in more user-friendly formats, including Web delivery (page 32).

19. Archives and Records Management should be combined in one independent agency reporting directly to the Mayor and Metro Council (page 34).

20. Metro should build a new, joint facility for the Archives and Records Center (page 35).

21. Metro should purchase a van for delivery and pickup services to be provided by the combined Archives and Records Center (page 37).

22. Metro should establish a Division of Digital Imaging and Micrographics in the new Archives and Records Center (page 38).

23. Metro should increase staff awareness of and familiarity with electronic records (page 39).

24. Metro should expand training in archives and records management (page 40).

25. Metro should add a minimum of 2 staff members to the Records Center in the next year (page 40).

26. Internal Audit should be given the responsibility for monitoring compliance with archives and records management policies and procedures (page 41).

Section 3: Current Status of Records in Metro Government

The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County is at a crossroads. Despite the proliferation of computer technologies, the volume of paper has increased. Despite the existence of archives and records management programs, Metro employees still demonstrate a lack of awareness of fundamental recordkeeping practices. And despite the renewed interest in disaster planning following September 11, Metro continues to have major vital records exposures. Metro Government has a choice to make: either it can address these issues now or it can continue to drift toward inefficiency, duplication of effort, and potential disaster.

Five years ago, The Metro Library formed a Government Records Task Force to study archives and records management. While this report was not widely distributed, it made several important points:

> The progress of Records Management within Metro Government has been very uneven due to the rapidly accelerating spatial limitations and a lack of understanding among Metro departments and divisions about the distinctions between the Records Center, the Metropolitan Archives, permanent and non-permanent records.

> Without a strong systematic records management program, efficient procedures for the disposition of records are relegated to emergency basis due to requesting departments' lack of space. Without the thorough records inventory and retention-setting procedures provided by records management, records are created needlessly, distributed aimlessly, filed haphazardly, transferred carelessly, stored poorly and maintained for inappropriate lengths of time.

The Task Force concluded that the records management program was strikingly underutilized by Metro government. The Task Force identified the following specific concerns:

- There are few rules and regulations governing the management of records.
- Current rules and regulations were developed haphazardly
- Major records management program elements are missing from the management of records within Metro government.
- Metro departments are using a wide variety of uncoordinated and ineffective storage services and technologies.
- Few of the records essential to the continued operation of Metro government have been identified and provided added protection.
- The Metro Archives is over capacity for the storage of permanently valuable records.

Most of these comments still are valid. In fact, the situation has gotten even worse in the interim. The preliminary planning for the renovation of the Municipal Courthouse and State Trial Courthouse identified a requirement for over 29,000 square feet of storage for existing files (not including growth). This is the equivalent of 2 entire floors. The totals are:

Department	Square Footage
Circuit Court Clerk	12,000
Criminal Court Clerk	7,500
Clerk and Master	5,000
Public Defender	2,000
District Attorney	1,800
Register of Deeds	1,150
Total	29,450

Not only is there a large volume of records, but the current storage conditions in the courthouse are substandard, to say the least. Temperature and humidity are unacceptable; dust and dirt also are major problems. Records are stored on wooden shelving, which is not desirable from a preservation standpoint. (Wooden shelves contain impurities which can be transferred to the records.) In addition, I am concerned about employee safety since some of the storage areas are remote, deserted, and poorly lit.

But the problems go beyond the criminal justice system. Across Metro Government I found records stored inefficiently. I also found inactive records still being retained in the originating departments, partly because the Metro Records Center is full and also because of departmental preferences to keep records near at hand.

Electronic recordkeeping will not have an immediate impact on this situation. Metro Government is involved in a bid process for the implementation of an enterprise-wide imaging and workflow system. While this will begin to reduce the volume of paper (provided originating departments agree to destroy paper after scanning), the process will take time. Metro Government does not have the luxury of waiting; it must address archives and records management now. While E-government, electronic filing, and digital signatures all hold great progress and should be encouraged, Metro cannot wait for the promise to be fulfilled.

As noted above, Metro Government has a serious disaster exposure with its records. The 1996 tornado that went through downtown Nashville was a warning that Metro should take seriously.

> **Recommendation 1: Metro should institute a vital records protection program for both paper and electronic records.**

While I found disaster plans in place for computer records, I found almost no planning for vital records stored on paper. Vital records are those records necessary for the continuing operations of the government or to protect the rights and interests of citizens, employees, or other parties. Vital records planning involves three phases:

1. *Identify records.* Identify vital functions and the records that support those functions.
2. *Identify disasters.* Consider both localized and regional disasters, including fire, flood, natural disaster, and terrorist attack.
3. *Devise protection.* Consider the full range of options: duplication and dispersal, off-site vaulting and storage, and on-site vaulting and storage.

Another enterprise-wide concern is the status of Records Officers. While each agency is required by law to appoint a Records Officer, many agencies do not consider this position to be a top priority.

Recommendation 2:   Metro should improve the status of Records Officers within agencies.

Improving the status of Records Officers will require the following: standardization of position descriptions through Human Resources, review of salary scales for Records Officers, formalization of a training program, and regular monitoring of the activities of Records Officers within agencies.

Many of the pieces of a solution to Metro's records problems already are in place, including professionally-managed centralized archives and records management facilities. What is needed is the integration of these operations, the identification of sufficient space for their operations, and the addition of staff to provide increased levels of service. Such a commitment will not only benefit Metro Government, but it will benefit all the citizens whose rights and obligations are protected and defended through the records of Metro Government.

Section 4: Assessment of Records Center

General

The Metropolitan Records Center, which opened in 1991, serves as a storage facility for non-permanent records of Metropolitan government. The Records Center Manager, Mike Potts, is the liaison with all Metro departments, boards, and commissions on the development of records management programs (there are 81 records liaisons). He also assists with the development of Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs).

It is important to clarify the difference between the Metro Records Center and the Metro Archives. I found this to be a point of confusion among Metro employees. The differences are:

- With the Metro Records Center, there is a transfer of *physical* custody without a transfer of *legal* custody. The records are considered to be an extension of the files of the originating department, which still controls access.
- With the Metro Archives, there is a transfer of both physical and legal custody. The Archives becomes responsible for access, Freedom of Information Act requests, etc

I asked Mike Potts to conduct a "self assessment" of the Records Center and its operations. He identified the following plusses and minuses:

- Plusses
    - Excellent job of tracking boxes and file folders made possible by routine procedures and good software.
    - Prompt pulling of requested items. (See minuses for delays in delivery and delays while out of office.)
    - Good job of notifying departments of records eligible for destruction.
    - Good job of preparing RDAs for departments who are willing to provide essential information
    - Good job of pulling records that can be destroyed
    - Good communications with regular department contacts

- Minuses
    - Delays in delivery of requested items as a result of
        - Being out of the office (vacation, sick, training)
        - Metro mail pickups. Items requested after 9:30 a.m. will not go out until the next day
    - Departments must be self-motivated; usually this happens when there is a crisis.
    - Need to do a better job of educating records officers in addition to daily department contacts

- o Need a better system for the delivery of boxes to departments. Currently he uses a personal car, a department car, Metro mail, or the Sheriff's Office.
- o Need a packet that would include all forms and procedures. The Internet also could be used for this purpose

This is a very fair assessment of plusses and minuses, and parallels what Metro employees told me in my focus groups and interviews.

The scheduling of records is one of the most important responsibilities of records managers. In Metro Government, the Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) process seems to work well. As of February 25, 2002, the list of RDAs is 34 pages long. There also is an 18-page General Retention Schedule organized according to functional areas.

By law, Mike Potts serves as co-staff of the Public Records Commission along with the Metro Archivist. In that role, he assists in preparing the Commission meeting agendas and all RDA proposals to be presented at each Commission meeting. He also presents the staff recommendation to the Commission on each proposal.

To summarize, records management in Metro at present is crisis-driven – Mike tries to deal with agency crises as they materialize. This is the best he can do with limited staff and storage space. As these resource limitations are addressed, records management will become less of a crisis activity and more a part of the normal course of business.

Storage and the Records Center

The Records Center holds a total of 14,518 cubic feet of records. Of this total, 8,499 cubic feet are archival records being held because the Metro Archives is completely full and cannot accept further transfers. Archival records are 59% of the total capacity of the Records Center. Without a long-term solution to archival storage, this total will grow, affecting the ability of the Records Center to fulfill its broader mandate of efficiency in government.

The total volume of 14,518 cubic feet of records naturally includes some large and small collections. As is common with records centers, the top 5 departments account for approximately 50% of the volume of records (49.41% exactly). With the Metro Records Center, these departments are:

Department	Cubic Feet
Health	2,339
Criminal Court Clerk	1,404
Probate	1,349
Accounts	1,161
Sheriff	920
Total	7,173

In planning for the future of a records center, it is crucial to analyze in detail the top 5 departments. I recommend that the Records Center monitor these departments closely. Any change in recordkeeping policies, storage environment, etc., in these 5 departments will have a dramatic impact on the Metro Records Center.

One way to measure the measure the efficiency of a records center is to compare the volume of records added with the volume of records destroyed. The figures for the Metro Records Center for the last 9 years are:

Fiscal Year Ending	Cu. Ft. Added	Cu. Ft. Destroyed	Net
1993	4,382	1,892	2,490
1994	2,773	1,109	1,664
1995	4,112	1,028	3,084
1996	1,898	1,118	780
1997	2,053	1,047	1,006
1998	1,122	1,208	(86)
1999	1,554	1,341	213
2000	1,923	1,523	400
2001	1,805	3,199	(1,394)
Total	21,622	13,465	8,157

This table shows that except for the large destruction of records in 2001, the trend over the last decade has been to add more records than are destroyed. As a result, there are over 8,000 more cubic feet of records in the Records Center now than in 1993. This is a 61% increase in volume without any additional staff.

I asked Mike Potts to generate from the Records Center database a projection of the volume of records eligible for destruction over the next 5 years. The projections are:

Year	Projected Destruction
2002	1,881
2003	1,858
2004	1,256
2005	1,048
2006	611
Total	6,654

Even in the best years, the projected annual destruction will barely keep up with the rate of addition to the Records Center. The conclusion is inescapable: regular destruction of records will not solve the space problems of the Records Center.

> **Recommendation 3: The Metro Records Center must have sufficient storage space to manage the inactive records of all Metro agencies, including the judicial system.**

The front room of the Records Center could be configured as a multi-function area:

- On-site reference by authorized individuals
- A backup site for an agency that needs to re-start operations. (This would require the installation of numerous data ports in the area.)
- After hours drop off of records. This would require installing a second set of locks and alarms to segregate the front room from the rest of the facility.

The Records Center uses O'Neil's Commercial Records Center Software. They will install the NT version soon. Several people I spoke with said that it would be important for their departments to have on-line access to their portion of the database. O'Neil is able to provide network access at a cost of $2,500 per license. Each participating department also would need a barcode scanner. These costs probably should be borne by the participating departments.

The Records Center is storing almost 1,000 books for the Register of Deeds. These books are already on microfilm and normally should be transferred to the Archives. There have only been 2 requests since 1995. These records are a good candidate for transfer to commercial storage, should that option become necessary.

If the floor will support the weight, it is possible to install compact shelving in the Records Center, thereby increasing space significantly. If Metro is not able to create a new Records Center, Metro should contact a shelving vendor to determine the suitability of compact shelving and the increased capacity that would result.

In 1994, a water pipe burst in the ceiling. I recommend installing water sensors in the floor to detect such leaks should they occur after hours.

While the Records Center has air conditioning, it does not have temperature and humidity controls. This normally is not a concern in a records center, where records only have short-term value. In Metro's case, however, the Records Center is storing overflow archival records which will be affected by improper temperature and humidity conditions.

The Records Center has fire and burglar alarms but no sprinkler system. This is a major issue, especially in light of several recent commercial records center fires. In order for the Records Center to fulfill its mission, it must be able to protect records from fire. Sprinklers are a necessity, not a luxury.

> **Recommendation 4: Because of problems with the existing Records Center (insufficient storage space, poor storage environment, and lack of sprinklers), Metro should build a new Records Center rather than renovating the current facility.**

It is important to note, however, that the current Records Center facility is much better than some of the agency storage areas from which records were removed. The records are secure and managed in a professional way. This is an improvement over previous Metro practice.

When records are sent to the Records Center, they are accompanied by a transmittal sheet. At present, departments can e-mail the transmittal (as a spreadsheet) to Mike. I recommend that Metro move to a system whereby the transmittal form is completed on line and submitted electronically.

The mass movement of files is an issue. Though the Metro Records Center does the best it can with limited resources – primarily by using trustee labor from the Sheriff's Department – a dedicated pickup and delivery service would be more responsive to daily customer needs. This does not preclude continuing the use the Sheriff's Department as the situation requires.

Each division of Metro government needs a means of tracking records throughout their life cycle. A metro-wide database that incorporates bar coding should be purchased or developed to do this.

Records currently are destroyed at the Thermal Plant. If this facility is closed, Metro will need another means of secure destruction of records.

As Metro departments implement document imaging systems, it is important not to fill the Records Center will the paper copies of records scanned into the imaging systems. If the records have permanent value, they can be transferred to the Archives. But even this option should be considered carefully. If the Archives is pressed for space, agencies can be required to store the original paper in a commercial facility (at agency expense).

Requests and Retrievals

In addition to storing and destroying records, the Records Center also is responsible for retrieving records and returning them to the originating departments. The request totals for the last 9 years are:

Fiscal Year Ending	Total Requests
1993	569
1994	1,661
1995	2,271
1996	2,641
1997	2,224
1998	3,114
1999	3,807
2000	3,371
2001	5,565

Over the last decade, the annual volume of requests has increased almost tenfold (978%), again without any increase in staff in the Metro Records Center

As noted above, during the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the Records Center answered 5,565 requests. The top 5 departments in requesting records were:

Department	Request
Register of Deeds	1,678
Personnel	977
Criminal Court Clerk	689
Purchasing	368
Accounts	280
Total	3,992

These 5 departments represent 72% of the total requests. Once again, these are the key customers for Records Center services and should be monitored carefully in the future.

Requests for records are submitted via fax or telephone. The requestor has to provide the location of the box in the Records Center. This is an extra level of security and is a very good practice.

Some departments do not find the Metro Records Center easy to access. The request process is manual (or in some cases e-mail) and they may have to send staff to the Records Center to retrieve files. If the Records Center had an electronic request form and delivered records, some departments said they would use it more.

> **Recommendation 5: The Metro Records Center should have its own secure service for the pickup and delivery of records.**

Naturally, a dedicated delivery service will introduce new management issues: delivery schedules, down time for maintenance, coverage during absences (vacation, sick time), etc. Nevertheless, I believe the benefits of the new service will make it worthwhile.

A centralized solution to records is in the best interests of the taxpayer. An expanded Metro Records Center, however, needs to emphasize retrieval and not just storage. The Records Center should be linked to computers in the originating departments. Ideally, employees should be able to submit requests for records electronically (provided security safeguards are in place). A dedicated delivery service would complete the package of customer service.

Staffing

At the present time, the entire "staff" of the Records Center is Mike Potts. For over 10 years, he has single-handedly kept the Records Center functioning. The success to date of the records management program is due to his dedication to Metro Government and his hard work on behalf of the citizens.

As the Records Center takes custody of additional records, especially more recent records from the judicial system, it will need to expand staff to meet client expectations. These centralized staff increases are more cost effective than adding staff in the various Metro departments. Several departments said that they would only increase shipments to the Records Center is a secure delivery system was established. Since such a system is not now in place (requests are delivered through Metro Mail), staff will have to be increased.

> **Recommendation 6: The staff of the Metro Records Center should be expanded as service level requirements increase.**

In Section 7 of this report, I present a plan for the phased increase of Records Center staff.

Budget

The Metro Records Center provides its current services with a very small budget. The total 2001-2002 budget for the Metro Records Center is just $70,154. This has to make the Records Center one of the most cost-effective operations in Metro government. Some ways to re-state the budget are:

- The cost per cubic foot stored is $4.83 per year or $.41 per month
- The cost per request is $12.61

It is difficult to find equivalent records management operations for comparative purposes. One of Metro's goals for the coming year should be to establish a regular benchmarking process with equivalent governments both inside and outside of Tennessee. This exchange of comparative information is the best way to measure progress toward program objectives.

During the course of this study, I was able to obtain some statistics for Knox County. In the absence of a larger benchmarking process, Knox County can serve as a beginning point for analysis. The comparisons between Metro and Knox County are:

Category	Metro	Knox County
Total Square Feet	8,000	40,000
Current Storage (cu. ft.)	14,518	32,300
Annual Budget	$70,154	$300,00
Requests per year	5,565	11,000
Employees	1	7
Requests per employee	5,565	1,571
Cost per cu. ft. stored	$4.83	$9.28
Cu. ft. stored/employee	14,518	4,614
Cost per request	$12.61	$27.27
Delivery	Metro Postal	Staff driven van

We can use the above comparison to project the number of records management staff Metro would need to provide services equivalent to Knox County.

- Viewed from the number of requests, Metro would need 3.5 employees
- Viewed from the volume of records stored, Metro would need 3.1 employees

We can also use the above comparison to project the annual budget needed to provide equivalent services:

- Extrapolated from the cost per cubic foot, the Metro budget should be $134,727
- Extrapolated from the cost per request, the Metro budget should be $151,758

> **Recommendation 7: The budget of the Records Center should be increased to meet expanded service requirements.**

Currently the Records Center does not charge-back for its services. I think this is the correct way to structure the operations. Records management should be a cost borne centrally by a government. In those cases where a government changes back for records management services, it is common for agencies do the opposite of what you want in order to save money. For example, if an agency is charged-back for the boxes it stores, some agencies will decide not to ship records to the Records Center. While they are saving a few dollars on the agency budget, they are costing the government as a whole more money by storing records in expensive office space.

I would only charge-back for Records Service if an agency refuses to accept a recommendation that makes professional sense. Some examples:

- If an agency waits for the regular next-day delivery, there is no charge for retrieval of records; if the agency requires a special delivery sooner, it pays a premium for the service.
- If an agency microfilms records, there is no cost for this service.
- If an agency destroys records after reformatting, there is no charge; if an agency decides to retain the originals after reformatting, it pays a premium.

The Metro Records Center will need to establish a fee schedule for the non-standard services. Each agency also should sign a Level of Service Agreement with the Records Center acknowledging its understanding of the free services and agreeing to the costs of the extra services.

Training

Training sessions are conducted as needed on an agency-by-agency basis. With an increase in resources, there should be regular training for agency managers as well as records liaisons. The initial focus might be some of the recordkeeping issues raised by e-mail and other electronic formats and media. The Web site can be an additional means for delivering training.

Recommendation 8: Records Management training should be expanded both in quantity and method of delivery (including the Internet).

Section 5: Assessment of Archives

General

The Metropolitan Archives was established in 1982 by Mayor Richard Fulton. In 1985 the Archives became a division of the Nashville Public Library. Kenneth Fieth is the Metropolitan Archivist.   The Archives has 30 record groups and over 5 million documents. The Archives also has a Friends Group with over 130 members.

The Archives currently receives government records through the Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) process as approved by the Davidson County Public Records Commission. The RDA process guarantees a complete records life cycle analysis by: the department creating the records, the Records Center that provides temporary storage, and the Archives which holds records of permanent historical value.   The Archives also collects the papers, both public and private, of former metropolitan, city, town, or county officials. The holdings of the Archives date from 1784.

The term "archives" has three meanings, which people very often confuse:

- *Records.* The items being preserved.
- *Space.* The location where the records are preserved.
- *Agency.* The program that administers the preservation of records.

Metro's planning for archives must include all three aspects of the term.

The Metro Archives defines its mission as follows:

> The Archives collects and preserves the historically valuable permanent records of Metropolitan Government and its predecessors, the City of Nashville and Davidson County.

I believe that this mission statement should be revised to reflect current thinking in the archival profession.   For example, archivists tend to prefer "enduring value" to "permanent value."   This acknowledges the fact that appraisal criteria to determine archival value may change in the future; our successors should not be bound by today's decisions to retain records. Similarly, records can have enduring value for more than "historical" reasons – they can merit archival preservation for legal reasons and fiscal reasons, even if they are not used for historical research. I would re-phrase the mission statement as follows:

> The Archives identifies, preserves, and make available the records of enduring value created or received by Metropolitan Government and its predecessors, the City of Nashville and Davidson County.

At the present time, the Archives does not take custody of records newer than 1963, the formation date of Metro Government.   Once the Archives has more storage space, I recommend that the Archives adopt the National Archives' practice of accepting records when they are 25 years old.

The Archives is part of the Metro Library.   This has been a supportive administrative placement, especially under the current Library Director.   While later in this report I will recommend an administrative restructuring that makes sense to me, the recommendation does not reflect any specific concerns about the Library.   Rather, it reflects the desire to combine archives and records management in the same department.

Another part of the Library is the Nashville Room.   I tried to clarify the different missions the Metro Archives and the Nashville Room.   As I understand it, the differences are:

- The Archives collects the historical records of government
- The Nashville Room seeks to document the history of the city (public and private organizations)

This distinction has been somewhat blurred as the Archives has acquired some non-government collections.

> **Recommendation 9: The Archives should refocus its mission exclusively on government records.**

As part of this redefinition, the Archives and Nashville Room should work cooperatively to develop a documentation strategy for Nashville and Davidson County.   I would recommend the following areas of collection:

- The Metro Archives should be the sole repository for government records and the papers of former city and county officials.
- The Nashville Room should document all other aspects of Metro life and culture.

The redefinition of mission may require the transfer of some collections from one repository to the other.

> **Recommendation 10:   the Metro Archives and the Nashville Room should develop a documentation strategy for Nashville and Davidson County.**

The Archives does not have on-line access to the Library database. They must load data locally from a CD-ROM. This is an inefficient process that wastes valuable staff time. The Archives' Web site (www.geocities.com/metroarchives) also is maintained by the Friends of the Archives. This should be moved to the main Metro Web site rather than being hosted on a commercial Internet Service Provider.

> **Recommendation 11:   The Archives' Web site should be moved to the main Metro Web site rather than being hosted on a commercial Internet Service Provider.**

I was told that there is no process to enforce transfer and compliance with policies. The Records Center also has problems with compliance. This is an issue to which I will return later in the report.

Facilities: General Comments

In January of 1986, the Archives moved into the renovated Mt. Zeno Elementary School on Elm Hill Pike. This facility contains 6,250 square feet with approximately 7,200 cubic feet of storage. The Archives also has 8,499 cubic feet of permanent records stored in the Metro Records Center.

In February of 2001, the Archives opened an additional facility with the renovation of the old Green Hills Branch Library. All public reference services were transferred to the Green Hills site and the Elm Hill site is used as a vault, storage facility, and photographic darkroom.

The current situation with two facilities is one of necessity, not desire. It is an inefficient structure since both facilities must be staffed and the staff are not able to assist one another in peak times. There also are delays in the retrieval of records for researchers.

Some of the options for the Archives are:

- *Construct a new building.* This would permit consolidation of all services in 1 location. Ken estimates that the new building would require 25,000 square feet of space with compact shelving for storage. If the Archives moved out of Elm Hill, it would be possible to turn the entire facility over to the Records Center.

- *Renovate an existing building.* A renovation has risk, especially if it involves use of basement space.

- *Expand Green Hills*. It might be possible to add a second story or expand out the back. If necessary to get everything in the expanded facility, it would be possible to microfilm low use records and destroy the originals.

- *Do massive reformatting on microfilm.* When combined with the destruction of original records, this would reduce space requirements. While this avoids capital costs, the staff still would be split. It also is costly to produce a high volume of quality microfilm. The State Archives should be able to provide ballpark figures for the cost of microfilming.

- *Use compact shelving in the current locations.* While this will buy some time, it will not solve the problem of split staff.

- *Use commercial storage.* This may be a temporary solution during renovation, but I do not recommend this as a long term solution. Archival records require temperature and humidity controls which most commercial records centers do not possess.

- *Build a cooperative facility with the State Archives.* I explored this option when I met with the staff of the State Archives. In the current budget climate, they did not think the state would want to partner in a building. I still think this is an attractive option worth further exploration.

The ideal solution would be to construct an archives building with sufficient space for the collection and public service (reference, exhibits, etc.) The new building should be located in an area where people will like to go. Metro could also rehabilitate an old building, provided temperature and humidity can be controlled. It might be possible to share the building with one or more other units of Metro.

> **Recommendation 12: The Metro Archives should be relocated to a single facility with sufficient space for collection storage, collection maintenance, and public service.**

The location of the Archives is important, but is not critical – as long as the neighborhood is safe. Regular users of the Archives told me that even having to pay $5/day for parking would not be bad. As far as they were concerned, the Archives could even be located almost anywhere, especially if there was a lunch/break room for researchers. To quote from my meeting with a focus group of archival patrons

> As we were concluding, I was told once again that the top priority is one facility for Archives. As one researcher told me: "It should not be a monument with marble. While the building should look decent and be clean, it should not be about decoration. Rather, the money should be put into care of the collection and service to researchers."

Reference Activity

Davidson County is the "mother county" for middle Tennessee. Since it was a crossroad for migration, many genealogists are interested in the county's records. Metro should not underestimate how many tourist dollars are generated by "traveling genealogists." This can be an important source of revenue.

Since the expansion into the Green Hills location, usage of the archives collections has increased significantly. A number of high-use collections were relocated to Green Hills: marriages, wills, plat books, Chancery Court, County Court, and Criminal Court records. Researchers comment frequently on the spacious accommodations and the open, inviting atmosphere of the new location. They also complimented the staff. Researchers commented that the staff was knowledgeable, friendly and helpful.

The Archives maintains 2 measures of reference activity: "reference transactions" and "visits." The former refers to the number of documents pulled while the latter refers to the number of on-site visits. The totals for the last five fiscal years are:

Fiscal Year	Reference Transactions	Visits
1996-1997	8,982	1,513
1997-1998	3,710	1,627
1998-1999	2,737	3,450
1999-2000	2,882	1,603
2000-2001	4,294	6,560

The most notable statistic is the jump in research visits after the opening of the Green Hills location. In one year, visits increased more than fourfold (400%).

Budget

In terms of budget for the Archives, I only was able to obtain salaries and benefits (and some telecommunications costs) for the past 5 years. These are the only items that are specifically budgeted in the branches and the archives. The totals are:

Fiscal Year	Budget
1998	$133,051
1999	172,142
2000	144,784
2001	175,341
2002	182,914

This is a total increase of 37% over 5 years, or 7.5% per year. This is a modest rate of growth, especially since the Archives now must staff 2 facilities.

Other Activities

The Archives also is involved in a number of other activities, including:

- Preserving over 500,000 negatives from the Nashville *Banner*.
- Microfilming records, including almost 100,000 images from the Chancery Court Case Files.
- Acquiring several thousand pages of original Nashville newspapers dating from 1819, courtesy of the National Archives.
- Developing public programs and making presentations.

Two archival databases are available on-line: marriages (1864-1905) and photographs. The conversion of the database led to a loss of 5,000 entries and illustrates the care that must be exercised in the migration of electronic records.

Outreach is an important archival activity that should be expanded. Exhibits should be one focus, outreach to schools another. This year the State Museum sponsored its first "Archives Day," which was very successful. The Archives could give awards for (1) use of archives and (2) support of archives; the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York does this as part of Archives Week.

How can we get the schools interested in history and archives? One approach is to support the fourth grade curriculum which deals with local history. The current interest in World War II or aviation history might be beginning points. Members of the Friends Group, as well as the Metro Archivist, could serve as speakers in the schools. Any new Archives building should have space for tours.

Elm Hills Facility: Specific Comments

Over 8,000 cubic feet of records are stored at Elm Hill. This is a 1948 building with maintenance problems: the roof leaks, the water is rusty, etc. Furthermore, since the space is completely full, there is a fear that departments will just destroy records

The building has 3 air handling units with humidity controls. There are smoke detectors but no sprinklers. This is a major weakness of the present facility and could be reason enough to relocate the Archives.

There is a preservation laboratory capable of handling encapsulation, cleaning, repairing, and deacidification. These are essential functions for an archives and must not be lost in any new or renovated space.

Deeds that have been microfilmed probably can be destroyed, provided that the microfilm meets quality standards. Ken has chosen not to destroy theses deeds. If the Archives will retain these items, they could be stored in a commercial facility in order to free-up space in the Archives. (Unless, of course, the Archives acquires sufficient space in a new or renovated facility.)

Also, there is an extensive collection of old City Court Docket Books that must be retained but never are retrieved. These also could be stored off-site to free-up space.

The floor probably can support compact shelving, though a structural engineer will have to check it.

Original microfilm is kept in the Elm Hill facility, with use copies in Green Hills. I recommend that the original microfilm be stored off-site, for disaster protection as well as preservation reasons.

> **Recommendation 13: For disaster protection as well as preservation reasons, original microfilm should be stored outside of the Metro region.**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) has filmed over 740 boxes of records. They have a microfilm camera and operator working in the Metro Archives. Obviously, the original of this microfilm is stored out of the region.

Records continue to be requested from the Elm Pike location. Depending upon the record, either the Library messenger or the Metro Archivist will deliver the records. I was told that there can be a three to four day response time because of delivery routes and the scheduling of transfers.

Green Hills Facility: Specific Comments

The facility was built in 1969 as a branch library. Only minor modifications were made to the space before the Archives moved in. A fireplace divides public from staff space.

The use of the Green Hills Building is a temporary solution. One positive aspect, however, has been an increase in visibility of the Archives that has led to skyrocketing use. People are beginning to appreciate the Archives more.

The advantages of the Green Hills facility are: a good location, a meeting room, and parking. Attendance at meetings of genealogical groups has boomed since the move to Green Hills. It is an open, inviting facility, not a dreary building. Several researchers told me that they had experienced allergy problems with the Elm Hill facility.

There are disadvantage to Green Hills as well. One disadvantage is the lack of room for conservation activities. Alabama, for example, is cleaning records using volunteers. It also is expensive to move records between buildings. If patrons knew what was at Elm Hill, they probably would request more records

The computers in the building are running 4 different operating systems. This leads to interoperability problems.

The highest use items are marriage records and court minutes. Approximately 60% of requests are from genealogists and 20% are historical. The Archivist also can certify copies of marriage records.

As a former branch library, there are windows all around. Ultraviolet filters have been installed. The building has smoke detectors but no sprinklers.

There is a unique collection of high school yearbooks. This could be a way to establish contacts with the schools and connect them to the Archives.

The conference room is important for community activities. It brings people in contact with the Archives. I recommend a more extensive exhibit program for the lobby of the building.

> **Recommendation 14:   The Archives should expand its outreach programs, especially exhibits and working with the schools.**

The building is closed Friday but open Saturday. It is a friendly location for researchers, especially genealogists. There is free parking, restaurants, shopping, etc. One option would be to capitalize on the location by building a large enough archives on this site.

However, there is a lack of resources for even some of the most basic equipment for researchers: a working change machine and an up-to-date microfilm reader/printer.

Nevertheless, researchers choose to come to the Metro Archives even when the same records are in the State Archives. Researchers say this is because of the higher level of service offered by the Metro Archives. Rather than just counting the *number* of researchers, the Archives should develop a measure of *customer satisfaction*.

Section 6: Review of Statutes, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures

As part of this study, I reviewed the following:

- Metro Code, Chapter 2.140, Public Records Commission
- Metropolitan Government Archives: Policy and Procedure Manual
- Records Center Procedures
- "Internet and Electronic Mail Use Policy"

Metro Code, Chapter 2.140, Public Records Commission

The definition of "public records" is very broad – all documents in an office or created by that office. This definition is in keeping with professional practice, though most definitions read more like the one found in the Tennessee Code (10-7-301):

> "Public record(s)" or "state record(s)" means all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency.

It also is common to define what is "non-record." Some typical examples of the latter are:

- Reference books and similar materials
- Drafts and working papers
- Extra copies of publications

In Tennessee Code, "working papers" are defined as records, but ones that "become obsolete immediately after agency use or publication" (10-7-301). Tennessee Code has three categories of records: permanent, temporary, and working papers. These three categories should be explicit in Metro Code.

> **Recommendation 15: The definition of "record" in Metro code should include the distinctions found in Tennessee Code. The definition of record also should be extended to include records on all media and in all physical forms.**

In terms of membership, the County Clerk believes he no longer should be a member. He recommends substituting the Metro Clerk, who has many of the recordkeeping duties formally associated with the County Court Clerk. I support adding the Metro Clerk to the PRC whether or not the County Clerk remains a member. This may require a change (or an exemption from) Tennessee Code section 10-7-401.

> **Recommendation 16:   The Metro Clerk should be made a member of the Public Records Commission.**

Tennessee Code (10-7-302) permits members of the State Public Records Commission to "designate a deputy with a vote as such person's agent to represent such person." At least one current member of the Metro Public Records Commission would like to see a similar provision in Metro code.

Tennessee Code (10-7-307) clarifies the status of records transferred to the State Archives: "Title to any record transferred to the state archives is vested in the state library and archives." Metro Code should include a similar acknowledgement that there is a change in legal custody of records transferred to the Metro Archives.

There is no change in legal custody of records transferred to the Metro Records Center. Section 10-7-308 says this on the state level: "Title to any record transferred to the section (records center) shall remain in the agency transferring such records to a state records center."

The Metro Code should be changed to require that mayoral papers be transferred to the Archives. Now, each mayor makes an individual decision in this matter. These records have too much historical significance to risk removal or destruction.

> **Recommendation 17: The Metro Code should be changed to define mayoral papers as "public records" and require that mayoral papers be transferred to the Metro Archives.**

Metropolitan Government Archives: Policy and Procedure Manual

This manual is designed to assist researchers in the use of the Archives facility. As such, it may be one of the first things researchers consult. Therefore I recommend that some general sections be added about the nature of archival records, the identification of archival records in Metro government, and the relationship of archives and records management.

The procedures in the manual seem professionally sound, especially in light of the Archives' division between two locations. I do think, however, that the procedures can be made more "user friendly."   The University of Tennessee's manual, *Records Management for County Governments,* is a good model. Its prose is accessible and is written for its intended audience.

Records Center Procedures

Records Center procedures are included on several separate sheets: guidelines for use, packing records, etc. I recommend that these procedures be compiled in a user-friendly manual available in print and Web-based versions. Examples and samples would also be useful in the manual.

> **Recommendation 18:   Archives and Records Center policies and procedures should be presented in more user-friendly formats, including Web delivery.**

"Internet and Electronic Mail Use Policy"

Metro has recently issued a policy for "acceptable use" of Metro-provided Internet and e-mail services.   This policy is very thorough and even includes recordkeeping requirements often omitted in similar government statements. I commend Metro for the policy as issued, but do have a number of suggestions in case the policy ever is revised.

I was very pleased to see the following paragraph in "Section IV, Background:"

> E-mail and Internet-generated electronic records that are created in the normal course of official business and retained as evidence of official policies, actions, decisions, or transactions may be public records subject to public inspection. These records are subject to records management requirements under Nashville Metro Code 2.140.

This is a strong statement often omitted from similar policy statements and I commend Metro for including it.

It should be noted, however, that the above paragraph has a different definition of "public records" than that found in the authorizing legislation for the Public Records Commission.   The statutory definition does not say that records must be "retained as evidence."   I prefer the statutory definition, because it prevents someone from arguing that a decision not to "retain a document as evidence" makes the document a "non-record." This could be especially risky in the e-mail environment, where individuals can easily make destruction decisions without seeking proper guidance.[1]   The key point is this: All Metro policies, procedures, or other official statements should use a consistent definition of "record."

There is a second reference to records management at the bottom of page 2:

> Content downloaded from the Internet, if allowed to accumulate on a server, can quickly consume the server's disk space and may cause system problems. Although deletion of unnecessary content downloaded from the Internet is encouraged, users should consult Metro's record retention guidelines for proper instruction regarding disposal or archival [NOTE: this probably should read "archiving' or "archival preservation"] of Internet downloads.

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[1] The Federal definition does mention that a record is "preserved," but it also says "or worthy of preservation." This makes it more explicit that professional judgment must be sought.

Similarly, the section on "E-mail specific background" (page 3) has the following paragraph:

> E-mail communications, if allowed to accumulate on a server, can quickly consume the server's disk space and may cause system problems. Although deletion of unnecessary e-mail communications is encouraged, users should consult their supervisor for proper instruction regarding disposal or archival [NOTE: this probably should read "archiving' or "archival preservation"] of Internet downloads.

The e-mail paragraph has a slight change from the Internet content paragraph that concerns me. Whereas the Internet paragraph requires employees to consult "Metro's record retention guidelines for proper instruction regarding disposal," the e-mail paragraph requires them to "consult their supervisor." From a records management standpoint, I prefer the former to the latter.

The section on "Potential Risks: Legal Liability" should include a recognition that *improper destruction* of records also is a legal exposure (as Enron/Arthur Andersen have learned). The wholesale destruction of e-mail or Internet content must be avoided – destruction must be governed by a records retention schedule.

The section on "Enforcement" has a section on records management: "The archival [NOTE: should be "archiving" or "archival preservation"] and retention of public records contained in e-mail communications is the responsibility of the individual departments and must be in accordance with State law and policy adopted by the Public Records Commission." This section has a major weakness that should be addressed: it applies enforcement to e-mail communications but not to Internet-related content.

I think the changes suggested above will make this policy statement even stronger.

Section 7: Plan for Improvement

I believe that a plan for improving archives and records management in Metro Government involves 8 elements:

1. Vision for the future
2. Organizational placement
3. Facilities
4. Reformatting
5. Electronic records
6. Training
7. Staffing
8. Compliance

Vision for the Future

Archives and records management should be seamlessly integrated in Metro Government. Records should be managed professionally throughout their entire life cycle, from creation or receipt through destruction or archival preservation. Scarce resources should be combined in a way that increases efficiency and maximizes the delivery of services to both government agencies and individual citizens.

Organizational Placement

I recommend that Archives and Records Management be combined in one independent agency reporting directly to the Mayor and Metro Council. I believe this is the best way to achieve the above vision.

My recommendation that the two functions be combined in a new agency should not be seen as a reflection upon the current administrators of the programs. Both the Metro Clerk and Director of the Library have been supportive of their respective operations. I think, however, that an independent, unified agency will best be able to take Metro Government to the next level.

> **Recommendation 19: Archives and Records Management should be combined in one independent agency reporting directly to the Mayor and Metro Council.**

If Metro does not wish to establish an independent agency, my fall-back recommendation would be to combine archives and records management under the Metro Clerk.

Facilities

I have considered a number of facility options for Metro Government:

- Use a commercial records center for expansion storage.
- Install compact shelving in the existing facilities to increase capacity.
- Expand the Metro Records Center and Metro Archives as separate facilities.
- Expand Metro Records Center and Metro Archives in a shared facility.
- Expand the Metro Records Center and/or the Metro Archives in a facility shared with its state equivalent (State Archives and/or State Records Center).
- Establish a separate records center just for justice records.
- Establish a major digitizing initiative (using state employees or a contract service) to reduce the volume of records sufficiently to continue utilizing the current facilities.
- Establish a major microfilming initiative (using state employees or a contract service) to reduce the volume of records sufficiently to continue utilizing the current facilities.

I believe that the most cost-efficient option is for Metro to build a new, joint facility for the Archives and the Records Center. It also would be possible to renovate an existing structure, if certain key concerns were addressed.

> **Recommendation 20: Metro should build a new, joint facility for the Archives and Records Center.**

Though I was not asked to review existing locations, I think that the current Elm Hills property might serve the purpose. The current site is accessible and has adequate parking. It also should be large enough to construct a building with a large footprint sufficient to meet current and future needs.

The property could be used in one of three ways:

- *Construct a new building behind the current buildings.* When the new facility is completed, move the records from the old buildings to the new one. The old buildings would then be demolished to become the parking lot. This is the preferred option since no records will need to be moved during construction.

- *Construct a new archives building as an addition to the current ones.* This would require that the current archives building be converted to records center storage.

- *Demolish the current buildings and construct a new building in the same location.* This would require moving all records out of the two existing buildings and starting from scratch. A commercial records facility would have to be used for the short-term storage of records during construction.

As a records manager and archivist, I plan facilities based upon the volume (in cubic feet) of records that need to be stored rather than just thinking in terms of square footage. This reflects the fact that records can be stored in various configurations requiring different amounts of square footage.

I recommend that any new facility be planned to meet records volume for a minimum of 20 years. During that time, we all hope for a decrease in the volume of paper because of the use of digital technologies. But even if Metro stopped producing paper tomorrow, there is a 10-15 year backlog of records already in the pipeline.

As an additional hedge, I recommend building a larger building now and installing fixed shelving rather than compact (movable) shelving. Should our hopes for a decrease in future paper not materialize, Metro still could install movable shelving in the future to increase the capacity of the new facility.

I recommend planning the following storage space for the Archives:

Category	Cubic Feet
Current volume stored at Elm Hills	8,000
Current volume stored in the Records Center	8,500
Estimated growth (500 cubic feet/year for 20 years)	10,000
Total	26,500

For the Records Center, I recommend the following storage space:

Category	Cubic Feet
Current volume at Elm Hills (excluding Archives)	6,500
Estimated one-time transfer of inactive records from the judicial system	5,000
Estimated growth. The net increases for the past 9 years have averaged 906 cubic feet/year. Estimate 1,000 cubic feet for 20 years	20,000
Total	31,500

Ceiling heights and stack heights have a major effect upon the ratio of cubic feet of records to square feet of floor space required. As the ceiling/stack heights increase, the ratio of cubic feet of records to square feet of required floor space increases, and the space required to house the records decreases accordingly. A general guideline is as follows:[2]

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[2] This information is taken from: Betty Ricks, *Information Resource Management: A Records System Approach* (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing, 1988), 96.

Height of Stacks	Ratio: Cubic Feet/Square Feet
8	2.7/1
10	3.3/1
12	3.9/1
14	4.5/1
22	7.1/1

Applying this formula to the projected needs of the Records Center reveals the following:

- Storing 31,500 feet of records on 8-foot stacks would require 11,667 square feet.
- Storing the same volume on 12-foot stacks would require only 8,077 square feet.

Other considerations apply to a determination of stack height: floor load, staff convenience, and fire protection. On the latter point, I recommend consulting manuals for records centers issued by the National Fire Protection Association.

The new facility also will need space for the following: receipt and processing of records, staff offices, microfilming and digitizing, research room, exhibits and outreach. The square footage required will depend upon whether the Archives and Records Center are co-located in one building – some areas can be shared in common.

The combined archives/records management facility also will be able to use staff more efficiently. It also will be possible to have one dedicated pickup and delivery service.

> **Recommendation 21:   Metro should purchase a van for delivery and pickup services to be provided by the combined Archives and Records Center.**

Reformatting

My visits and interviews identified numerous record series that would be candidates for reformatting. Reproducing the records on microfilm or digital technologies would have the following advantages:

- Space savings of 95% or more
- Reduced wear-and-tear on originals that must be retained
- Disaster protection

There are two sections of the Tennessee Code that are particularly relevant to this planning process:

> Tennessee Code (10-7-406) authorizes permanent records to be reformatted in the following ways: "photographed, microphotographed, filmed or microfilmed in duplicate." The original records then can be destroyed, provided "the duplication process shall result in permanent records of a quality at least as good as prescribed by the minimum standards of quality for permanent photographic records made and established by the bureau of standards of the United States government."

> Effective July 1, 1999, a county public records commission may "authorize the destruction or transfer of original public records which have been reproduced onto computer or removable computer storage media, including CD-ROM disks." The State Archives is directed to establish standards for approved technologies. At the moment, the State Archives has not approved any computer medium for permanent preservation. It should be noted that this section does not require the use of "non-erasable" computer media (like WORM disks), although the state's imaging guidelines do require WORM systems.

I considered a number of options during the course of my study:

- Microfilm backlog through a service bureau.
- Expand in-house microfilming at the Metro Archives.
- Transfer microfilming to the Metro Records Center and expand it.
- Microfilm backlog through the State Archives.
- Digitize backlog centrally (have to be certain the records are worth digitizing).
- Only do day-forward scanning in the originating departments.
- Centralize scanning from microfilm (in Metro or State Archives).
- Centralize generating COM microfilm from digital files (Metro or State Archives).

Several departments said they would like to have Metro government offer a centralized microfilming and digitizing service. This was particularly the case with departments generating confidential records – they did not want to have the records handled by an outside vendor.

> **Recommendation 22: Metro should establish a Division of Digital Imaging and Micrographics in the new Archives and Records Center.**

This new division should have the following capabilities:

- Producing preservation-quality microfilm
- Scanning paper
- Scanning microfilm
- Generating preservation-quality Computer Output Microfilm (COM) from digital files

I recommend that Metro ask the State Archives for comparative cost information. The State produces high quality preservation microfilm, similar to what Metro would produce. This is a good benchmark for Metro. If the State Archives provides a cost per frame of microfilm, Metro can compare the cost of microfilming to the cost of storing records in a new facility.

The Division of Digital Imaging and Micrographics will need to balance two important priorities:

- Reducing the amount of paper *coming from agencies*, so it never reaches the Records Center or Archives.
- Reducing the amount of paper *already in the Records Center and Archives,* according to priorities established by the staff.

Both priorities must be pursued in order to control growth now and in the future.

Electronic Records

Electronic records will be one of the biggest challenges for Metro in the next decade. Metro should begin planning now by increasing its staff's awareness of and familiarity with electronic records.

> **Recommendation 23: Metro should increase staff awareness of and familiarity with electronic records.**

The best option to build expertise might be to transfer a staff member from the Information Services area to the combined Department of Archives and Records Management. This person could supervise the centralized scanning facility and serve as the primary resource for electronic records management (with some professional development in the areas of archives and records management). The State of Pennsylvania has taken this approach to archives and records management.

Training

Metro needs to expand training in archives and records management. Some of this training should take the form of dedicated workshops; others should be "records management modules" in existing Metro training sessions (supervisor's training, etc.).

> **Recommendation 24: Metro should expand training in archives and records management.**

Archives and Records Management training also should have a heavy Web-based component. This is especially appropriate for some of the more technical topics like managing e-mail.

The development and delivery of additional training will only be possible if the size of the staff is increased or outside contractors are used.

Staffing

Recordkeeping is a *line* rather than a *staff* responsibility. Metro can never hire enough people in the Records Center or Archives to "do" recordkeeping for everyone. Department heads need to be educated about the importance of records management and their responsibilities for an effective program. The status of records management liaisons also needs to be elevated.

In order to provide an equivalent level of service with Knox County, which is a reasonable comparison, Metro needs to add a minimum of 2 staff members to the Records Center in the next fiscal year. This does not count the extra work that will be required as the Records Center expands because of the move of records during the relocation projects.

> **Recommendation 25: Metro should add a minimum of 2 staff members to the Records Center in the next year.**

One new hire should be a driver/delivery person. As I see it, this person will spend the morning making pickups and deliveries in Metro departments. The afternoon will be spent refiling records and pulling requests for the next day.

With the second new position, Metro should try to hire a Certified Records Manager for the following tasks:

- Conducting records management training
- Conducting compliance audits
- Enforcing requirements for records officers
- Helping to design electronic records systems

To date, Metro has tended to equate archives and records management with paper. The skills required, especially in the Records Center, have been in the area of controlling and moving paper. Metro needs to add expertise dealing with electronic records management issues, concerns, and solutions.

If the Archives is consolidated into one facility, I believe that the existing staff will be sufficient in the short term. There is a large backlog of unprocessed archival records, however, that will have to be addressed within the next few years.

Compliance

An archives and records management program must have a compliance component to be successful. Rather than increasing staff in Archives and Records Management to monitor compliance, I recommend that Internal Audit be given the responsibility for monitoring compliance with archives and records management policies and procedures.

> **Recommendation 26: Internal Audit should be given the responsibility for monitoring compliance with archives and records management policies and procedures.**

This responsibility should be formalized in any redefinition of the Metro records management program.

Internal Audit is the logical place because they are responsible for monitoring compliance with all Metro policies and procedures. Indiana University has become the model for establishing a partnership between the archives and auditing departments. For this to work at Metro, staff of Internal Audit would need some professional development in the area of archives and records management.

Three-Year Plan

Metro needs to address the above eight components in a systematic way rather than as individual elements. To assist with this, I have prepared a plan that establishes goals for each of the next three fiscal years. The plan is as follows:

Component	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Vision for future	Finalize vision statement and circulate it widely. Clarify differences between the Archives and the Nashville Room. Improve the status of Records Officers in agencies.		
Organizational Placement	Establish combined Department of Archives and Records Management (DARM).		

Facilities	Identify new facility and prepare architectural plans. Relocate collections to temporary space, if necessary. Purchase delivery vehicle.	Move into new facility. Take custody of bulk of inactive judicial records.	
Reformatting	Establish Division of Digital Imaging and Micrographics in temporary space. Begin by expanding current microfilming program.	Add capability to digitize both paper and microfilm.	Add capability to generate Computer Output Microfilm (COM) from digital files
Electronic Records	Send DARM staff for training. Work with the implementation team for the new Metro imaging system.	Develop policies and procedures for electronic records.	Begin implementing management of electronic records for Metro.
Training	Develop a plan to expand archives and records management training. Expand outreach to schools.	Revise existing archives and records management training modules. Prepare modules for other Metro training sessions.	Develop Web-based training materials.
Staffing	Hire two new staff for Records Center (driver and Certified Records Manager).	Add a staff member who will specialize in judicial records. Add staff for microfilming and digital imaging.	Determine if additional staff are needed to process the backlog of archival materials or for electronic records management.
Compliance	Begin partnering with Internal Audit. Determine the nature and method of compliance.	Develop checklists, forms, etc. for use by Internal Audit in monitoring compliance. Conduct 1-2 pilot audits.	Roll out full program of compliance audits.

Conclusion

As noted earlier in this report, the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County is at a crossroads with archives and records management. Metro Government has a choice to make: either it can address now the issues presented in this report or it can continue to drift toward inefficiency, duplication of effort, and potential vital records disaster.

One of Metro's main resources is its people. I have found consistent interest in and support for improvements to archives and records management. Several departments already have begun making changes to policies and procedures, even before submission of the project's final report. This bodes well for the future.

It has been a pleasure to assist Metro with this study. I would be happy to assist with the implementation of any of the recommendations contained in this report.